

PRESS RELEASE

On May 13, 2009, United States of America Ambassador to Burundi Patricia N. Moller took part in a ground-breaking ceremony for an HIV/AIDS Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Center that will be constructed with U.S. \$320,000 in funds from the U.S. Department of Defense HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (DHAPP) in the Musaga area south of Bujumbura.

The VCT Center will provide quality medical services for active and retired members of the Burundian armed forces as well as their families. The Burundian Ministry of National Defense and Former Combatants participated in the design of the Center, which will include a laboratory, reception area, treatment room, counselors' offices, a pharmacy and a conference room for HIV/AIDS awareness training. The international NGO Population Services International (PSI) will train VCT staff, provide awareness training for the Center's clients and promote voluntary HIV/AIDS testing among Burundian National Defense Force (FDN) soldiers.

Ambassador Moller said that the VCT Center project symbolizes the commitment of the people of the United States and Burundi to stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS and eventually eliminating this deadly virus. She emphasized that HIV/AIDS was not only a danger to public health, but also posed a long-term threat to the stability and security of those countries whose social and economic systems have been devastated by the disease. The fact that this project was designed in full cooperation with the Burundian government would, the Ambassador said, ensure its success as a continuing symbol of hope and determination in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.